**Soft loans to fishermen**

11. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Fishworkers Forum has urged to extend soft loans to fishermen at an interest rate of 6 percent;

(b) if so, whether their proposal has been examined and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance;

(c) if so, their reaction thereto; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASUMUDDIN): (a) and (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Cost of cotton production in Maharashtra**

12. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE
be pleased to state:

(a) the input cost to production of one quintal of cotton for farmers in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra;

(b) the extent to which it can fetch in the open market;

(c) whether there is a big gap between the production cost and the selling price;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to stop dumping of highly subsidized cotton from the rich nations in order to save indigenous farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The estimated cost of production of cotton (kapas) for different varieties in the Vidarbha region of ~~Ma~~hara~~shtr~~a ranges from Rs. 1795 to Rs. 2181 per quintal for the cotton season 2003-04. The prices of H-4 variety of cotton ranges from Rs. 1960 to Rs. 2130 during 2004-05 and from Rs. 1960 to Rs. 2100 till 10-2-2006.